

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL JAMES C. IRWIN

BEFORE THE COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

U. S. SENATE

16 MAY 1986

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE. MY NAME IS JAMES C. IRWIN. I AM A REAR ADMIRAL (UPPER HALF) AND HAVE JUST RECENTLY COMPLETED A TOUR AS COMMANDER OF THE FIFTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT IN PORTSMOUTH, VA.

I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU THIS MORNING SEEKING YOUR APPROVAL OF MY NOMINATION TO BE THE NEXT VICE COMMANDANT OF THE COAST GUARD.

THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE I HAVE ACQUIRED IN THIRTY-THREE YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE IN THE COAST GUARD QUALIFIES ME FOR THIS POSITION. I HAVE HAD A WIDE RANGE OF OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCES, COMMANDED MANY UNITS, AND HELD IMPORTANT SENIOR STAFF POSITIONS. THE PAST FOUR YEARS I HAVE BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN DEFENSE READINESS. I HAVE ALSO HAD EXPERIENCE IN THE INTRICACIES OF OUR BUDGET AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS.

IN ADDITION TO MY COAST GUARD ASSIGNMENTS, I HAVE SPENT THREE YEARS IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION AND THREE YEARS AT THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS. I HAVE SERVED ON EACH OF OUR COASTS, THE GREAT LAKES, THE MIDWEST, THE GULF, AND HAVE TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY THROUGHOUT THE COAST GUARD. I BELIEVE I KNOW THE COAST GUARD.

MY STRONG POINTS ARE LEADING PEOPLE, MANAGING RESOURCES AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS. I SENSE I HAVE THE RESPECT OF MY SENIORS, MY PEERS AND THOSE JUNIOR TO ME. I BELIEVE I HAVE A SIMILAR RESPECT FROM THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE OTHER ARMED SERVICES, BUSINESS LEADERS, LOCAL OFFICIALS, AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATS WITH WHOM I HAVE WORKED, NEGOTIATED, OR ASSOCIATED.

IN ADDITION TO MY PLEASURE AT HAVING BEEN NOMINATED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN, I AM MOST PLEASED AT THE STRONG SUPPORT I HAVE RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY DOLE AND THE COMMANDANT-SELECTEE, ADMIRAL PAUL YOST. THIS WOULD MARK THE FIFTH TIME I HAVE WORKED WITH OR FOR ADMIRAL YOST. WE MADE A GOOD TEAM...ONE THAT THE COAST GUARD AND OUR NATION CAN BE PROUD OF.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES THAT OUR NATION IS FACING AS IT ATTEMPTS TO BALANCE THE BUDGET AND AT THE SAME TIME ENSURE THE SECURITY AND WELL-BEING OF ITS PEOPLE.

I THINK FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE COAST GUARD RETAIN ITS THREE TRADITIONAL MISSIONS OF DEFENSE READINESS, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY OF PROPERTY AND LIFE AT SEA. I AM PREPARED TO ASSIST ADMIRAL YOST IN ENSURING THESE ESSENTIAL SERVICES CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED IN THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE MANNER.

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE THE COMMITTEE THAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS, EITHER NOW OR LATER FOR THE RECORD.